

EDUCATION AND POVERTY, RELATIONSHIP AND CONCERNS. A CASE FOR KENYA

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Abstract

Poverty has many dimensions and does not merely entail low levels of income or expenditure. According to Sen (1992), poverty is the lack of capability to function effectively in society. Inadequate education can thus be considered a form of poverty. Education is widely accepted as the main exit route from poverty. It is the backbone of growth and development of individuals and the nation. However, its achievement continues to elude many who are poverty stricken. This paper articulates the issues of education and poverty which is related to that of chicken-egg relationships. The study used secondary data from eight provinces in Kenya. The study correlated the poverty headcount with the educational indicators. It emerged from the data that provinces which had less poverty levels (Central-30.4% and Nairobi 29.5%) experienced high literacy rate, high enrolment and low dropout rate, while regions which had higher levels of poverty headcount (North Eastern-73.9% and Coast-69.7%) experienced low literacy rates, and poor academic performance. The study concluded that extreme poor are denied access to education, poverty hampers learning in developing countries through poor nutrition, health, home circumstances, quality, costs and inadequate resources for education. The study recommends the government to introduce/re-introduce/strengthen school feeding programme, subsidize school uniform and address the issues of opportunity cost for the extreme poor among others.

Key words: education, economic growth, poverty, relationship.

Introduction

Poverty is not simply the absence of financial resources, it is also lack of capability to function effectively in society. Poverty has many dimensions and does not merely entail low levels of income or expenditure. Sen (1992, 2001) define poverty as a condition that results in an absence of the freedom to choose arising from a lack of what he refers to as the *capability* to function effectively in society. This multidimensional interpretation moves far beyond the notion of poverty as being solely related to a lack of financial resources. For example, Sen's viewpoint would suggest that inadequate education could, in itself, be considered as a form of poverty in many societies.

There were 72 million children out of school in 2007 in sub-Saharan Africa. Business as usual would leave 56 million children out of school in 2015. Around 54% of children out of school are girls. In sub-Saharan Africa, almost 12 million girls may never enroll (UNESCO,

2010). In Asia, some 74 million of the world's total 132 million children (or 56% of the school-age population, 6–11 years old) are not enrolled in primary education. Of those who enrol, at least one-third abandon or drop out before completing the primary cycle. The reasons are compelling and well known as poverty and social exclusion. Moreover, gender disparities make the picture look bleaker: of the out-of-school children in the region, some 46 million (62%) are girls, concentrated especially in South Asia (World Bank, 2008).

In spite of the antipoverty measures implemented since independence poverty is still rampant and afflicts a large proportion of the population especially those in the rural areas. Data available from the Kenya Integrated Household Budget Survey (KIHBS) show that national absolute poverty declined to about 46 per cent in 2005/06 from 55.5 per cent in 2000. Although the proportion of the population living in poverty has declined, the number of those living below the poverty line is estimated to have increased from 13.4 million in 1997 to about 16.6 million in 2006. Government of Kenya introduced free primary education in 2003 and tuition free secondary education in 2008. Primary net enrollment rate rose from 6,314,726 to 7,614,326 by the end of 2003 representing a 22.3% increase nationally. In 2005 the district that had registered over 20% increase in enrolment in 2003 hardly recorded more than 5% of standard one enrollment, it is also estimated that about 3millions children are not enrolled in primary schools (Sifuna, 2005). For the children who enrolled in grade one, only between 46-48% can manage to complete the final grade. Majority of them dropout and others repeats one grade more than once.

It's out of such a background that this paper is established to discuss the relationship of education and poverty. Contribution of education on poverty reduction is discussed. Analysis of secondary data on poverty and education indicators is assessed. Also the influence of poverty in education system is evaluated and recommendation made.

Education and Poverty

It has been established that investment in education and human capital formation are essential for economic growth and poverty reduction. The inter-relationship between education and poverty can be understood in two ways. Firstly, investment in education increases the skills and productivity of poor households. It enhances the wage level as well as the overall welfare of the population.

Secondly, poverty may constitute a major constraint to educational attainment. This may be interpreted from three perspectives. The very first one is from the resource-side where poverty may handicap the acquisition of learning and other pedagogic materials (Awan et al., 2008). The second perspective is that poverty may generate social pressures which mutilate the mindset of poor students and lastly, Bramley and Karley (2005) have shown that when poverty grabs an institution it deteriorates the teaching standards.

The direction of causality between poverty and education linkages has been shown to flow both ways. On one hand poverty acts as a factor preventing people from getting access to education. On the other hand those with education are considered to be at less risk of poverty. Appleton (1997) states that each year of primary schooling is associated with a 2.5 percent fall in the risk of poverty, and that lower secondary schooling has roughly twice this effect. Overall, the effects of education on the probability of being poor were found to be very strong.

Contribution of Education on Poverty reduction

Earnings and Productivity

One notable thing regarding the role of educational attainment in poverty reduction is the direct linear relationship between education and earnings. Education does not only

increase the probability of being employed. Once in employment, better-educated individuals earn considerably more than the less-educated. From an economic point of view this is an unsurprising result and has been substantiated by numerous studies. Tafah (1998) studying private returns to education in Cameroon reached the conclusion that returns to education are positive and in some cases higher than returns to investment in other sectors of the economy.

It is documented in the literature that education and poverty are inversely related. The higher the level of education of the population the lesser will be the number of poor individuals because education impacts knowledge and skills which is supportive in higher wages (Tilak, 1994). Having established the inverse relationship between education and poverty, there is still a debate relating to the educational levels whether primary education is enough for poverty reduction or all educational levels (primary, secondary, higher and tertiary) have to be considered. Even the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of the United Nations and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) recommended by the World Bank focus upon primary education and the education of the girl child as a gateway out of poverty. In developing countries the social returns of primary education are much higher as compared to that of tertiary education (Colclough, 2005).

Social Benefits

Education brings social benefits that improve the situation of the poor, basic (primary and lower-secondary) education helps reduce poverty by increasing the productivity of the poor, by equipping people with the skills they need to participate fully in economy and society, lower fertility, improved health care of children, and greater participation of women in the labour market (World Bank, 1995). Education significantly raises the level of knowledge, the intellectual disposition, and the cognitive powers of the poor children, it helps in finding their personal identity and making lifetime choices congruent with this identity, increases relativism, tolerance and flexibility in the area of personal morality. It also appears to narrow the traditional differences between two sexes.

Economic Growth

Education is a basic need as well as a fundamental human right. It is the bedrock of all the other physiological needs. Education is valued as a source of economic progression and social mobility. Education contributes to poverty reduction by increasing the value of efficiency of the labour force and thus enhances economic growth. This economic growth is expected to translate into higher income lowering poverty levels. This is because the more educated an individual is the more productive he is expected to be both in the labour market and the household. Therefore, more education provision can raise income levels in general and remove groups from absolute poverty. Education remains one of the most powerful instruments for reducing poverty and inequality and laying the basis for sustained economic growth since income inequality is significantly and negatively related to education dispersion and the average educational attainment of the population.

Methodology of Research

The study relied on secondary data collected from the eight provinces in Kenya in terms of their poverty levels and education indicators in order to establish if there is any relation between poverty and education. Poverty headcount indicator was used, which measures the incidence of poverty, the proportion of the population that cannot afford to purchase the basic basket of goods and services as measured by the overall poverty line of Ksh 1562 per month per

adult equivalent. Education indicators used included: Literacy rate, enrollment rate, dropout rate and academic achievement. Data were analyzed by use of descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings are presented by use of tables and figures.

Results of Research

Poverty Headcount and Literacy Rate

Literacy is the ability to read and write in at least one language. Literacy, just like formal education can act to enhance the lives of the learners both economically and socially. The findings are presented in the table below.

Table 1. Poverty Headcount 2005/06 in percentage.

Province	Head count	Literacy rate
Central	30.4	85.9
North Eastern	73.9	18.7
Coast	69.7	56.0
Eastern	50.9	69.9
Nyanza	47.6	82.2
Rift valley	49.0	69.4
Western	52.2	81.1
Nairobi	29.5	96.5
National	49.1	76.8

Source: KNBS, 2007

The table above indicates that Central and Nairobi province had the lowest poverty head count of 30.4% and 29.5% respectively and the highest literacy rate of 85.9% and 96.5% respectively. Coast and North Eastern province depicted the highest poverty headcount of 69.7% and 73.5% respectively and the lowest literacy rate of 56% and 18.7% respectively. It can be noted that the provinces which had lowest poverty headcount depicted the highest literacy levels and vice versa. The same findings are also presented in the chart below for easy interpretation.

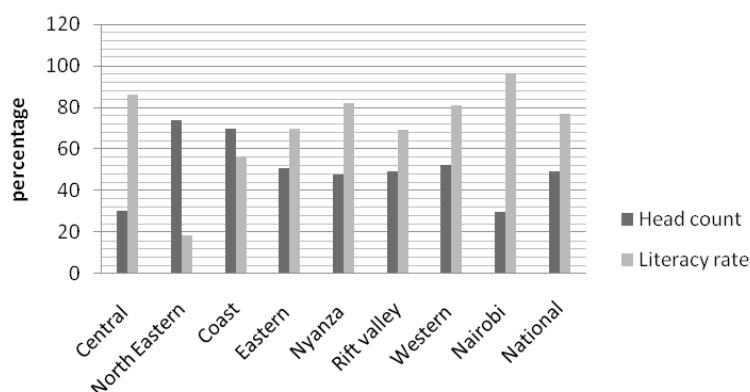


Figure 1: Poverty Headcount and Literacy rate

Further the data was analyzed using Pearson moment correlation and results are presented in the table below.

Table 2. Correlation analysis of poverty and literacy.

	Poverty (headcount)	Literacy
Poverty Pearson correlation	1	-0.880**
Sig(2-tailed)	0.0	0.004
N	8	8

**correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

From the table above the analysis indicates that there is a strong negative relationship between poverty across the provinces and literacy levels, Pearson's product-moment correlation $r = -0.880$ which is above 0.5. The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), the p-values is >0.05 .

Poverty Headcount and net Enrollment

The net enrollment ratio excludes overage and underage students to capture more accurately the system's coverage and internal efficiency but does not account for children who fall outside the official school age because of late or early entry rather than grade repetition. Data on net enrollment of pupils in primary schools were collected and analysis is presented in the table 3 below.

Table 3. Primary net enrollment rate and poverty headcount per province- (2005-2007).

Province	Headcount	2005	2006	2007
Central	30.4	87.5	83.0	82.6
North Eastern	73.9	22.7	22.4	26.9
Coast	69.7	74.2	71.8	80.8
Eastern	50.9	94.3	96.3	98.2
Nyanza	47.6	97.8	97.8	98.3
Rift valley	49.0	86.6	90.8	96.2
Western	52.2	96.9	96.9	99
Nairobi	29.5	40.1	40.2	50.7
Grand total	49.1	74.2	71.8	80.8

Source: MOE, 2009

It is evidence from the table above that there is higher enrollment of pupils in primary schools in Central, Eastern, Nyanza and Western provinces as compared to that of North Eastern, Nairobi and Coast provinces. Rift valley province has an increasing enrollment trend across the years 2005-2007 while the other provinces experienced a fluctuating enrollment during the period (2005-2007).

Further the data was analyzed by use of Pearson's product-moment correlation in order to establish the relationship between the variables. The findings are shown in the table below.

Table 4. Correlations analysis of poverty and net enrollment.

	Poverty	2005	2006	2007
Poverty Pearson correlation	1	-0.252	-0.240	-0.237
Sig	0.0	0.547	0.567	0.573
N	8	8	8	8

It can be noted from the table above that there exists a negative relationship between poverty and pupils enrollment across the years 2005-2007. Interpreted differently is that where there is high poverty levels there is likelihood of low pupils enrollment holding other factors constant. The relationship between the variables is not strong because there are other factors that determine enrolment apart from poverty levels.

Poverty Headcount and Dropout Rate

The study also sorts to establish relationship between poverty level and dropout per province across the years 2005-2007. Dropouts are those pupils who leave school before the end of the final year of an educational cycle in which they are enrolled. Dropouts are far more susceptible to health, economic, and social problems. The findings are presented in the table below.

Table 5: Primary school dropout rate and poverty headcount per province

Province	Head count	2005	2006	2007
Central	30.4	3.4	3.4	1.9
N.Eastern	73.9	7	11.1	4.7
Coast	69.7	7.3	7.9	5.6
Eastern	50.9	3.4	3.4	1.9
Nyanza	47.6	4.6	6.1	3.5
Rift Valley	49.0	4.5	5.6	3.6
Western	52.2	5.0	9.7	1.6
Nairobi	29.5	6.5	6.6	4.1
National	49.1	4.9	6.4	3.5

Source: MOE, 2009

From the table above it can be noted that coast and North Eastern province had the highest dropout rate of 7.3% and 7% respectively in the year 2005. Also the two provinces depicted relatively high dropout in the year 2006 and 2007 compared to other provinces. Further the variables were correlated and summary of findings are presented in table 6 below.

Table 6. Correlation analysis of dropout and poverty.

	Poverty	2005	2006	2007
Poverty Pearson correlation	1	0.740*	0.686	0.584
Sig	.	0.036	0.060	0.128
N	8	8	8	8

*correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table above indicates a positive relationship between poverty and enrollment across the years 2005-2007, the variables depicted a Pearson product-moment correlation(r) of 0.740, 0.686 and 0.584 in the years 2005, 2006 and 2007 respectively. The correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed) in the year 2005, with p-value >0.05.

Poverty Headcount and Academic Achievement

On academic achievement to establish whether there existed a relationship between poverty and academic achievement. The Kenya national examination council (KNEC) is responsible for examinations at the end of basic education cycle. The Kenya certificate of

primary education (KCPE) constitutes the main formative assessments nationally accepted in measuring the level of attainment during the primary school cycles. The table below covers analysis of performance at KCPE.

Table 7. Academic achievement and poverty headcount per province, 2005-2007.

Province	Head count	2005	2006	2007
Central	30.4	247.2	245.3	244.0
N. Eastern	73.9	216.7	229.3	225.8
Coast	69.7	242.4	234.8	244.1
Eastern	50.9	238.2	238.2	238.4
Nyanza	47.6	244.3	243.8	242.3
Rift valley	49.0	250.5	252.4	248.8
Western	52.2	250.7	252.7	255.7
Nairobi	29.5	270.2	270.6	267.4
National	49.1	245.6	245.6	245.3

Source: MOE, 2009

It can be deduced from the table above that Nairobi province which had the lowest poverty headcount posted the best results as compared to the other provinces in the year 2005, 2006 and 2007. North Eastern province which had the highest poverty headcount (73.9%) depicted the lowest academic performance in the national examination in the period 2005-2006 as compared to other provinces. The data was also correlated to establish the strength, direction and nature of relationship, the results are summarized in the table below.

Table 8. Correlation analysis of academic achievement and poverty headcount.

	Poverty	2005	2006	2007
Poverty Pearson correlation	1	0.773*	0.769*	0.659
Sig	0.0	0.025	0.026	0.075
N	8	8	8	8

*correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The table above indicates that there is a strong positive relationship between poverty levels with academic achievement. Pearson's product-moment correlation (r) is 0.773, 0.769 and 0.659 in the years 2005, 2006 and 2007 respectively. The correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed) in the year 2005 and 2006 with p -value >0.05 .

Comparison of the Poverty Headcount and Education Indicators per Province

Data on Poverty headcount and education indicators of 2006 per provinces of Kenya were compared. The education indicators used included: Literacy rate, enrollment, dropout and academic achievement. The findings of the analysis are shown in the table 9 below.

Table 9. Poverty headcount and Education Indicators per province.

Province	Poverty	Literacy rate	Enrollment	Dropout	Academic achievement
Central	30.4	85.9	83.0	3.4	245.3
N. Eastern	73.9	18.7	22.4	11.1	229.3
Coast	69.7	56.0	71.8	7.9	234.8
Eastern	50.9	69.9	96.3	3.4	238.2
Nyanza	47.6	82.2	97.8	6.1	243.8
Rift valley	49.0	69.4	90.8	5.6	252.4
Western	52.2	81.1	96.9	9.7	252.7
Nairobi	29.5	96.5	40.2	6.6	270.6
National	49.1	76.8	71.8	6.4	245.6

From table above it is noted that the province which had the lowest poverty headcount; Central and Nairobi also experience high level of literacy rate, enrollment academic achievement and low dropout rate. While the provinces which had the highest level of poverty headcount thus deemed to be the poorest; North Eastern demonstrated the lowest literacy rates of 18.7%, lowest enrollment of 22.4%, highest dropout of 11.1% and the poorest academic achievement of 229.3. Coast province which second after North Eastern in relation to highest poverty levels exhibited a literacy rate of 56%, enrollment rate of 71.8%, dropout rate of 7.9% and a academic achievement mean score of 234.8.

Further the Pearson product-moment correlation was used to determine the relationship between the poverty headcount and educational indicators. The findings are presented in the table below.

Table 10. Correlation of poverty headcount and education indicators.

	Poverty	Literacy	Enrollment	Dropout	Academic achievement
Poverty:Pearson's correlation	1	-0.880**	-0.240	0.656	-0.769*
Sig(2-tailed)	0.0	0.004	0.567	0.077	0.026
Literacy:Pearson's correlation	-0.880**	1	0.509	-0.583	0.783*
Sig(2-tailed)	0.004		0.198	0.129	0.022
Enrollmt.Pearson's correlation	-0.240	0.509	1	-0.583	0.033
Sig(2-tailed)	0.567	0.198		0.175	0.939
Dropout:Pearson's correlation	0.656	-0.583	-0.531	1	-0.189
Sig(2-tailed)	0.077	0.129	0.175		0.654
Academ:Pearson's correlation	-0.769*	0.783*	0.033	-0.189	1
Sig(2-tailed)	0.026	0.022	0.939	0.654	

**correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) n=8

*correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The table above indicates that there is a strong negative relationship between poverty and literacy ($r=-0.880$) and Academic achievement($r=-0.769$).Correlation of literacy is significant at 2-tailed with $p<0.01$ and academic achievement is significant at 2-tailed with $p<0.05$. Interpreted differently means that when the poverty headcount increases the level of literacy decreases and the academic achievement also diminishes. The table also shows that there is a positive relationship between poverty headcount and dropouts of students from education system($r=0.656$), this is also confirm from table 6, where North Eastern is exhibited the highest

level of poverty headcount and also the dropout rate as compared with other provinces. It can further be noted from the table that poverty headcount demonstrates a negative relationship with the enrollment ($r=-0.240$), this means that to some extent poverty influences negatively the enrollment of students, this findings confirm the results in table 3.

Discussion

Quality of Education

The term quality has different meanings and has been variously defined; as excellence (Peters and Waterman, 1982), Value or Fitness for use (Juran and Gryna, 1988), and/or exceeding customers' expectations (Cheng and Tam, 1997). ISO 8402 defines quality as the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied Needs. The Kenyan government is fully committed to provision of quality education to guarantee the right to every learner an education that offers a competitive edge in a global market. Despite such efforts, provision of quality education has remained elusive due to inadequate financial resources and other inputs in education (Mualuko, 2007; Maiyo, Jane & Irine 2009). When the free primary education was introduced in Kenya 1.5m children were enrolled that brought the gross enrollment to 104 % (MOEST, 2003). The overwhelming enrollment experienced resulted in putting pressure on the scanty/limited resources; classroom facilities, insufficient teachers and an inadequate supply of instructional materials that were available in the schools, apart from overcrowding in the classrooms, many of the public schools lost good teachers to private schools. This obviously meant that pupils from private school, who are from well-to-do families, had an advantage over those from public schools. In some public schools teachers to pupil's ratio are 1:80 and this has compromised the quality of education (Ngugi, 2007). High level of access does not translate into high quality of education. The most affected are usually the poor in society, the urban poor and the rural poor mostly in marginal districts. The resultant effect is that schools mostly located in poverty prone provinces/districts such as North Eastern tend to be disadvantaged hence offering less quality compared to schools in better endowed regions. This is evidenced in the analysis of secondary data table 4 where provinces that are wealthy such as Nairobi, Rift Valley and central provinces are relatively doing well in academic achievement as opposed North eastern and Coast provinces which depicted high poverty levels.

The poor seem to be more responsive to school quality. If educational quality is poor, then poor people are more likely not to attend than rich people (Morrisson, 2002). Education is both a consumption and an investment commodity, The poor always perceives the education as purely investment commodity and thus expects a greater returns which is associated with the quality of education while in the other hand the majority of the rich households sees education as more of a consumption good, they are not easily to be affected by the quality of education provided.

Enrolment

At the household level evidence suggests that children of poorer households are generally likely to receive less education. Data from Tanzania shows that at primary level enrolments rise with income group, with the primary Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) 77 percent among households in the lowest expenditure quintile, which is 6 percent lower than average and nearly 12 percent below enrolment rates among the wealthiest quintile. More pronounced disparities between enrolment rates exist at secondary level. Secondary GERs among boys in the lowest quintile are only 27 percent of the boys' average rates and just 13 percent of the rates among boys in the wealthiest quintile (UNESCO, 2008).

Deolalikar (1998) in his study found that Kenya appears to be spending significantly more on education compared with other African countries. Kenya's expenditure on education was 6.7 percent of the GNP in 1995 compared to 5.1, 4.7, 4.0 and 2.6 percent for Burundi, Egypt, Ethiopia and Uganda respectively (Kimalu et al., 2001). With the introduction of the new policy, about 1.5 million children have join primary school, but there are still many school going age children who are out of school. The gross primary enrolment rate was 104 percent in 2003, the net primary enrolment rate was estimated at 77 percent. The 1999 population projections (GOK, 2003), showed that the primary school going age population was 7.02 million in 2004 and 7.09 in 2005. Therefore a national net enrolment rate of 77 percent translates to 1.6 million children out of school. A combination of factors majorly including poverty, social problems, child labour, displacement, and lack of schools and teachers may have contributed to the low enrolment rate.

In its poverty eradication plans the government of Kenya lays out its goal of achieving universal primary education by 2015 and achieving a 15 percent increase in primary school enrolment. Notwithstanding these targets, the declining pattern of primary school enrolment as indicated in table 3 suggests that it may be difficult for the government to achieve its aims. This means that the free primary policy has failed to get the extreme poor children enrolled in the education system and thus calls for an alternative strategy for reaching out for the poor children.

Cost of Education

High financial costs of schooling make education less affordable to the poor, who are very cost sensitive (demand is price elastic). Opportunity costs of education are often also high (for example, children may work in agriculture or do domestic chores such as fetching water). In many societies, the benefits of education may be low or not well understood, particularly for girls.

The financial costs of schooling are often high, making it difficult for poor parents to afford schooling for their children. Such financial costs include not only school fees, but also other direct costs such as the costs of transport, school uniforms, and school books. In addition to financial costs, there are also non-financial costs, such as the opportunity cost of sending children to school. Particularly in rural areas, many children may be involved in agricultural work or domestic duties (for example, fetching wood or water), so sending them to school involves an opportunity cost to the household. There is usually a strong gender dimension to this choice: girls often have more household responsibilities, and there may be fewer well-paying jobs available for educated girls than for boys. In developing countries suffering high levels of HIV and AIDS, there is often a heavy burden on children to care for ill relatives, which may limit their educational opportunities.

The costs of attending school exert a negative influence on the school-enrolment decision. The estimates conducted in Kenya by IRIN,(2008) suggest that (at the mean) doubling the cost of schooling from 44 to 88 shillings a month would reduce the probability of school enrolment by about 2-4 percent. Despite the introduction of free primary education, parents are still expected to meet the costs of their children's uniform, food and healthcare. Those who are too poor to provide these basic necessities have chosen to keep their children out of school. It is estimated that a total of three million children are out of school so they are not benefiting from the policy of FPE. Therefore, although there has been a high enrolment in some areas, others have suffered from low enrolments(Table 3). The low enrolment in some places has created a problem of artificial teacher shortage and complicated staffing (Ngugi, 2007).

Morrisson (2002) notes that the demand for education may be quite sensitive to the costs of education, so that high transport costs or school fees may reduce the demand for education

substantially. Cost sensitivity (price elasticity) might even be greater among the poor, leading to greater inequality in access, as examples from Indonesia, Madagascar and Tanzania illustrate. The inverse is also true: reducing the costs associated with education, including school fees, is likely to improve school attendance most among the poor. That is one of the reasons why the global Education for All initiative places such a great emphasis on eliminating school fees in poor countries. The World Bank (2004) notes that poor people are often the last to enrol in basic education, thus government spending that improves access strongly favors' poorer households.

Educational Resources

In poor countries, the lack of educational resources in schools sometimes makes learning extremely difficult. In 2001, an average of only 8.7 on a list of 22 desirable resources for teaching were available in the 14 SACMEQ (Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality) countries, and as many as 10% of children (45% in Zanzibar) had no place to sit (UNESCO EFA, 2004). Such absence of basic resources and extreme overcrowding in many developing country schools means that other factors that are crucial for quality education (for example, teacher subject knowledge) may initially play a smaller role (Fuller, 1985).

In many of the poorest countries, the right combination of resources may also be quite important (World Bank, 2004). Without good textbooks or other classroom resources, more teachers cannot necessarily improve the quality of learning. Thus studies show great positive effects of more good textbooks, effects that often appear to be larger than those of additional teachers. How resources are combined and how they are used in the classroom, may be of great importance to gain optimal benefit from them. Part of the resource constraint in poor schools may result from inequitable distribution of resources. Often, resources are more widely available in urban than in rural areas, or in rich than in poor neighbourhoods within cities.

Even in countries where public resources are equitably distributed between schools; good teachers may avoid poor schools because of the greater difficulty of teaching poor children. Developing countries find it difficult to get good teachers to teach in rural areas; in rich countries, good teachers often avoid poor schools. Financial incentives have not been very successful at attracting better teachers to poor schools. This is partly because of the extreme difficulty of teaching poor children, often in deprived circumstances, and the preference of good teachers to teach in more affluent schools.

Conclusion

Education is widely accepted as the main exit route from poverty. It is the backbone of growth and development of individuals and the nation. However, its achievement continues to elude many who are poverty stricken. This has perpetuated the vicious circle of poverty, is most common in developing countries, particularly in rural areas, although pockets of poverty also exist in developed countries. Extreme poor are denied access to education, poverty hampers learning in developing countries through poor nutrition, health, home circumstances (lack of books, lighting or places to do homework), access to education, quality, costs and inadequate resources for education. It discourages enrolment and survival to higher grades, and also reduces learning in schools.

Recommendation

To achieve the millennium development goals by the year 2015, especially by the developing nations a program of subsidizing educational costs particularly by subsidizing school

uniforms, introduction of the school feeding programme and addressing the issues of opportunity cost for the extreme poor would be most effective in increasing enrolment.

The government should take the key responsibility of identifying the poor and making the poor to be known, so that every policy developed should be geared in improving the life of the extreme poor. Cards can be issued to the identified and certified poor so that they can access basic needs and social amenities at a subsidized price if not free.

Education is the main single factor associated with the probability of being poor, majority of those who are illiterate are poor. Thus, promotion of education by improving educational performance is central in addressing problems of moderate and extreme poverty. Specifically, primary education is found to be of paramount importance in reducing extreme poverty. Such an approach should form a core element in the poverty reduction strategy for every government, NGO, sponsors and donors.

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